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UNCLAS STATE 107534

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [LI](#)
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR HEAD OF STATE-LEVEL DEMARCHE BY
AMBASSADOR

¶1. This is an action request for the Ambassador or
Charge.

OBJECTIVE

¶2. The U.S. is engaged in a targeted effort to engage 17
countries who share close bilateral relations with the U.S.,
and whose UNGA voting records do not reflect that
partnership, to raise awareness at the highest level of
governments of poor voting coincidence and cooperation in UN
fora. The objective of this cable is to seek tangible
improvements in UNGA voting by Liberia. The President and
the Secretary have endorsed this initiative.

ACTION REQUESTED

¶3. To align Liberia's voting record more closely with that
of the U.S. on key votes, the Ambassador is requested to meet
with the Head of State, upon her return from UNGA, and
deliver a demarche bringing her attention to Liberia's low
voting coincidence with the U.S. (when not including
consensus resolutions). If the Head of State is not
available to receive the demarche
within a reasonable time, the meeting should be held with the
Foreign Minister. Embassy should also inform Deputy Minister
for International Organizations (and recently appointed
Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations)
Conmany Wesseh of the content of the demarche.

TALKING POINTS

¶4. Ambassador may draw on the following points:

-- As allies, the United States and Liberia
cooperate and work closely together in many areas.

-- We want to thank you for Liberia's vastly improved record
on issues the United States considers to be of greatest
importance, including Liberia's efforts to co-sponsor the
recent United Nations Security Council Zimbabwe resolution.

-- In addition, we appreciate Liberia's quick recognition of
Kosovo following that country's declaration of independence.

-- We also want to thank you for Ambassador Barnes' strong
support during his tenure as UN PermRep and we wish him the
best as he takes up his Ambassadorial post in Washington.

-- That said, in 2007 Liberia voted with the U.S.
in the UN General Assembly only 15 % of the time, when not
including consensus votes.

-- The United States views the United Nations as having
great potential for achieving progress on many issues. If
agreement and widespread support among Member States can

be reached for balanced and responsible resolutions, decisions, and other initiatives it would make the UN more effective and a more credible voice in the world.

-- We understand that some votes may be explained by solidarity with regional groups or blocs based on other factors, but, in our view, such solidarity often appears inconsistent with the national interests and policies of your government outside the unique culture of the United Nations.

-- As the new session of the UN General Assembly begins, I hope you will bear in mind that in the U.S. both the President and the Congress view UN voting coincidence as a barometer of the closeness of a bilateral relationship.

-We hope a strong ally like Liberia can deliver on votes that matter to the United States. We would like to see all of Africa improve its voting coincidence and we are looking to our close friend Liberia to provide leadership in that regard.

- In the coming weeks I hope we can begin a dialogue between our experts and yours on how we might better improve cooperation on issues of importance before the UN.

-- I hope that you will raise this issue with Ambassador Wesseh prior to his departure for New York, and seek to review personally your country's voting records on key votes.

End Points.

BACKGROUND ON THIS INITIATIVE

15. Key issues of importance to U.S. policy interests are being brought increasingly to vote in the UN. These include human rights, the UN budget, Israel, and development assistance. At the same time, the Group of 77 (G-77) and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) bloc is more unified and votes consistently against the U.S. The Department and other agencies have been working on a long-term strategy to counter these developments in the General Assembly. A key element of the Department's strategy is the delivery of demarches at the most senior level in 17 select capitals on UNGA voting records, U.S. priorities, and areas where we might work together more effectively. Often capitals are not aware of the low voting coincidence or how their country votes on U.N. matters. In some cases, capitals have given their Permanent Representatives at the U.N. a significant degree of independence to vote as they see fit. We believe that many capitals would be surprised to learn of their low voting coincidence with the U.S. at the UN, and could rectify this issue if raised in capitals at the highest level.

This is the first requested demarche, which seeks to make capitals aware of the issue and to seek tangible improvements in UNGA voting by the host country. Details on each UN Member State's most recent voting records are available on the Department's website at www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/c25867/.htm in the annual report to Congress entitled "Voting Practices in the United Nations 2007." The Department and other agencies believe that the diversity of national interests and ideologies outside the UN can be translated into better voting inside the UN through friendly but assertive approaches to G-77/NAM countries that have reasonably good relations with the U.S.

RICE